

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4594

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 2750

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN NUCLEAR REPROCESSING FACILITY

REF: ISLAMABAD 2670

1. YOU WILL RECALL MY REFTEL ON THE SUBJECT OF PAKISTAN AND IRAN JOINING TOGETHER IN A REGIONAL REPROCESSING PLANT. I WAS CONFUSED DURING THAT DISCUSSION WITH AZIZ AHMED AS HE CERTAINLY LED ME TO BELIEVE THAT THERE HAD BEEN A RECENT COMMUNICATION (I ASSUMED FROM THE SECRETARY OR THE PRESIDENT) TO BHUTTO OF WHICH I WAS UNAWARE, THAT IT HAD BEEN DECISIVELY TAKEN UP BETWEEN BHUTTO AND THE SHAH, AND THAT THE DECISION HAD BEEN MADE THAT THEY WOULD JOINTLY GO FOR A REGIONAL REPROCESSING PLANT. IT APPEARS NOW THAT HE EITHER GROSSLY OVER STATED THE CASE, OR WAS TALKING THROUGH HIS HAT.

2. WHILE WE WERE WAITING TO SEE BHUTTO LAST NIGHT ON OTHER MATTERS, I ASKED AZIZ TO BE MORE SPECIFIC AS TO JUST WHAT TYPE OF COMMUNICATION THEY HAD FROM US THAT WAS DISCUSSED AT LARKANA. HE SEEMED UNSURE OF HIMSELF UNTIL SHAHI APPEARED AND PRODUCED A CABLE FROM YAQUB KHAN WHICH SAID THAT SOMEONE IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD TALKED TO HIM ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF A REGIONAL PLANT SERVING PAKISTAN AND IRAN. AT THIS POINT WE WENT IN TO SEE BHUTTO.

3. WHEN ALL OTHER BUSINESS WAS FINISHED, I EXPRESSED TO

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BHUTTO IN ONE SENTENCE MY CONCERN OVER THE PITFALLS

PAKISTAN MIGHT FACE OVER THE FRENCH-BUILT REPROCESSING PLANT TO SEE WHAT HE WOULD SAY. HE TOLD ME, IN VIEW OF THE PEOPLE WAITING TO SEE HIM, THAT HE COULD NOT GO INTO THE MATTER IN DETAIL, INCLUDING ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION OR OTHER TECHNICAL MATTERS. HE SAID THE FUNDAMENTALS WERE THAT THEIR DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH THE PLANT WAS IRREVOCABLE, UNLESS THE FRENCH CHICKENED OUT. HE WANTED ME TO KNOW THAT THIS DID NOT CONFLICT IN ANY WAY WITH THE ASSURANCES AS REGARDS HIS INTENTION GIVEN TO THE SECRETARY DURING HIS U.S. VISIT IN EARLY 1975.

4. I TOLD HIM I UNDERSTOOD FROM AZIZ AHMED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISCUSSION WHILE THE SHAH WAS HERE OF AGREEING ON A REGIONAL FACILITY. BHUTTO SAID HE HAD REACHED NO DECISION ON THE MATTER BUT HE WANTED ME TO KNOW THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO GIVE POSITIVE CONSIDERATION TO SUCH A POSSIBILITY. UNLIKE THE PREVIOUS REPORT AZIZ AHMED GAVE ME IT WOULD SEEM THAT THIS WAS FOR THE FUTURE AND THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE.

5. I TOLD BHUTTO I WAS DISAPPOINTED IN WHAT HE SAID AS THIS ISSUE WAS INDEED WORRISOME TO US. HE SAID HE KNEW THAT FROM REPORTS FROM AMBASSADOR YAQUB KHAN, AND HE HAD ASKED HIM TO RETURN HERE IMMEDIATELY FOR CONSULTATIONS. HE SAID HE WANTED PERSONALLY TO GET YAQUB'S READING OF THE FEELING IN WASHINGTON ON THIS ISSUE, AND ALSO WANTED HIM TO KNOW HIS OWN VIEWS SO THAT HE COULD MOST EFFECTIVELY REPRESENT THESE VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT IN WASHINGTON. BHUTTO THEN REPEATED TO ME SOME OF HIS BRIEF STATEMENTS ON THE SUBJECT TO THE SECRETARY IN NEW YORK.

6. THIS WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT AS I HAD PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT FROM AZIZ AHMED THAT A SLIGHT OPENING MAY HAVE OCCURRED IN EASING THIS PROBLEM. THEY HAD OBVIOUSLY DISCUSSED THE MATTER YESTERDAY AFTERNOON BEFORE I ARRIVED, AND AZIZ SEEMED CONSCIOUS IN THE PRESENCE OF BHUTTO THAT HE HAD NOT GIVEN ME THE RIGHT PICTURE.
BYROADE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, JOINT VENTURES, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ISLAMA02750
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840105-0254
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760353/aaaabtty.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 76 ISLAMABAD 2670
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <14 OCT 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PAKISTAN NUCLEAR REPROCESSING FACILITY
TAGS: PARM, TECH, PK, IR, (AHMED, AZIZ), (BHUTTO, ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006